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JPRS L/9596

11 March 1981

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 10/81)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

ALGERIAN COOPERATION WITH IRAN

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 Jan 81 p 240

[Text] The release of the American hostages from Tehran was an undisputed success for Algerian diplomacy, a success indicative of the rapprochement between Algeria and Iran since the shah's fall. The official remarks made in Algiers just after the outbreak of the Iranian-Iraqi conflict already proved this; they deplored the breakdown in the agreement concluded there several years ago but they were favorable to Tehran. However, in the shah's time, Algeria rejected any relations with the government in power, so today there is still almost no bilateral cooperation. Apparently, both parties want to change this state of affairs.

Last week, an Iranian delegation headed by Mr Moussa Klantari, minister of transports and communications, went to Algiers on 21 and 22 January 1981, to meet with an Algerian delegation headed by Mr Salah Goudjil, minister of transportation and fishing. Beginning with the situation that, until now, only a single telex really linked Algiers and Tehran despite the frequent exchange of delegations, the two delegations agreed to extend the rapprochement to other areas. The political backdrop, said the Algerian national agency, "ALGERIA PRESS SERVICE," will henceforth be supported by an economic framework, and the transportation and communications sector will be the cornerstone and the first step.

Thus, anxious for close cooperation in the pre-eminently strategic sector, the Iranian and Algerian delegations decided to act in certain areas. For example, the creation of a joint maritime company and the exchange of maritime navigation information were discussed. Port use and management, serious problems for both countries because of the volume of their imports and exports, were also studied, as well as the possibility of a maritime agreement.

These talks also made recommendations about land transportation, where the innovation will probably be for Islamic nations to build a road system.

According to the proposals, air transportation experts and information will be exchanged; this was already discussed at a meeting in Tehran on 14 January 1981. Civil aviation personnel are to receive technical training in the state

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companies of the two countries.

Biannual meetings will be held in each of the capitals to encourage a flow of meteorological information.

Beyond the purely technical aspect of the talks, the political intent shown by the two parties stands out, emphasized ALGERIA PRESS SERVICE, adding that going beyond the transportation field and their initial mission, the Iranians and Algerians decided to set up cultural centers in the two countries and cooperate on media matters.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

BRIEFS

MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN CONTACTS--Rumors persist that the Moroccans and Algerians have had direct contacts about Western Sahara. The "long and cordial" handshake and some remarks exchanged in Mecca between King Hassan II and President Bendjedid would have given them substance, if Algiers had not immediately described them as a gesture of courtesy. The categorical denials by King Hassan II, in an interview with the German magazine "Der Spiegel," and of the Algerian minister of foreign affairs, Mr Mohamed Benyahia, who also denied the renewal of diplomatic relations between Morocco and Algeria, lead us at most to think that, indeed, as Mr Raymond Barre stated in a press conference at Rabat, "a certain evolution has taken place between Morocco and Algeria," but nothing more. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 Jan 81 p 240] 9479

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ALGERIA

FLN SEEN REASSERTING ITSELF IN POLITICAL LIFE

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 9 Jan 81 p 72

[Text] The FLN, the single party in power in Algeria, is reasserting itself in the country's political life after several years of relative eclipse. Observers drew this conclusion from the FLN Central Committee meeting held in Algiers from 29 to 31 December 1980.

The AFP [FRENCH PRESS AGENCY] dispatch noted that its proceedings were not marked by any spectacular change, but at the end of its last ordinary session, the Central Committee was strengthened in its role as the supreme political body in the country, since the eclipse, 6 months ago, of the political bureau. Its two figureheads, Messrs Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Mohamed Salah Yahiaoui, have almost disappeared from the political scene.

The FLN's process of regaining control over political life was illustrated, according to observers, by the central committee's decision to enforce, as of 1 January 1981, article 120 of the FLN code that only party militants could hold positions of responsibility in mass organizations (peasants, unions, youth, women and the moudjahidine.)

This measure could lead to the eventual departure of some elected officials who do not fulfill the criteria of the party statutes. According to observers, politically it would prevent infiltration of these organizations by individuals whose ideas differ from the official ideology. The most obvious example, according to their adversaries, is that of the partisans of the clandestine communist party, the PAGC [Socialist Vanguard Party] who have been infiltrating for several years.

Locally and regionally, to reassert FLN authority and influence, the party federation secretaries will be given pre-eminence in each of the 31 wilaya (departments), and will preside over "a coordinating council" made up of the army sector commander and the chairman of the people's assembly in the wilaya (regional council.)

Moreover, during its session, the central committee elected a central commission for discipline according to the code; it will be personally chaired by the head of state, Mr Chadli Bendjedid, the FLN secretary general.

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This commission has the power, if necessary, to suspend any central committee member who does not fulfill his duties as a militant.

The central committee also approved two resolutions on the nation's energy and health policy. The first restated Algeria's determination to align its natural gas and petroleum prices and called for a regular review of hydrocarbon exports in the medium and long-term, to reduce them progressively. A "higher institute of energy to implement energy policy based henceforth on preserving petroleum deposits, raising the price of natural gas and using alternative sources" will be created.

Several measures were advocated to improve the relatively neglected health sector. The principle of free medical care was solemnly restated by the central committee which recommended drafting a statute on the medical corps, raising wages, reorganizing the central pharmacy, etc.

"Liberalization" of medicine, to allow private practices, apparently was rejected by supporters of public medicine; in Algeria, it has been free for the past 6 years.

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ALGERIA

ANALYSIS OF ALGERIA'S AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 Jan 81
pp 229-230

Text Agriculture's precarious situation is a subject of serious concern for Algeria. The measures taken, planned or merely considered or discussed by the authorities give rise on the part of what the semi-official reporting calls "business and reactionary circles," to systematically tendentious remarks, but which do not fail to have a certain effect on the public. Some do not hesitate to speak of "the demolition of self-management" or even of "the abandonment of the cooperative system," and of course "the failure of the agrarian revolution."

Moreover, certain problems are actually appearing, with the latter being quite real, such as the dislike of rural youth for agricultural work; the escape to office jobs of those who have received an agriculturally oriented education; and more generally the desertion of the land. The huge undertaking for the "creation of a new man" by the agrarian revolution has not yet had, by any means, sufficient scope and duration for a new modern group of agricultural workers to develop, equipped socially and technically and intended to be the basis of a new agriculture. And the enthusiastic improvisation of rural self-management continues to give poor results, in spite of reforms which have already taken place.

The main decisions were taken by the FLN Central Committee during its session last spring and from now on a number of measures are beginning to be implemented. A considerable effort, contrasting with the restraint which formerly often characterized the regime, was carried out in the last several weeks by the authorities to inform public opinion energetically and fully. The minister of agriculture and agrarian reform, Selim Saadi, devotes himself to this task of popularization vigorously and convincingly. From now on the Algerian people will be able to realize the scope of the problem.

Selim Saadi mentions "a fact which had never been noticed:" 70 percent of the agricultural population is in the private sector and

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includes 95 percent of the small peasants; but this private agricultural group only holds 20 percent of the real agricultural potential, while the self management sector holds about 70 percent, although it is only 15 percent of the rural population.

From such a finding, it is logical to conclude that without neglecting at all the huge undertaking of the agrarian revolution, it is advisable to concern ourselves urgently with two essential tasks: to finally contribute to the small peasants deprived of better production facilities, and again put self-management in order so its great fundamental potentialities may produce a satisfactory return.

A Self-management Which is Finally Profitable

The self-managed areas should be transformed into homogenous units, which are economically viable. Saadi says that will be "the priority of priorities" and it does not mean either parcelling out or crumbling.

When the exodus of French settlers suddenly put the Algerian authorities in possession of 23,000 farms, a solution was improvised; these lands were regrouped, after a fashion, into 2,000 properties, whose operation was entrusted to agricultural workers hastily trained by a few technicians.

This was self-management: an urgent measure, but so in conformity with revolutionary ideology that it was characterized in itself and at first as a socialist victory, while its concrete results remain, as one could have expected, very spotty. The restorations which were soon attempted were jeopardized, both by the lack of qualified administrative personnel and by the difficulties of getting managers and accountants accepted by the peasants attached to their role of self-managers: the nature of the properties, which most often were too large and made up of farms which were sometimes fairly distant from each other, on the other hand, was a formidable obstacle to every rehabilitation.

The main decision taken last year by the FLN Central Committee and which is a fact, consists of the conversion of 2,000 self-managed properties into more than 4,000 divided-up farms. These new farms will be of such a size and shape that the efficient use of modern mechanical equipment will be easy there and their management could be systematic and profitable.

Since this fall, 400 agricultural engineers have been on the spot to effect this reorganization, which will last throughout 1981. Alongside this, 750 clerk accountants are being trained per year who will be distributed among the new units. In addition, the El Biar Technological Institute of Pedagogical Agricultural Application has just inaugurated a series of 4 month courses which will

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give agricultural engineers and teachers basic ideas of management (accounting, production systems, drawing up development and recovery plans) neglected too much until now for the benefit of technical specialization. Thus the agricultural farm will be able to really manage itself, while in actual practice, in spite of claims to self-management, management actually is handled by outside finance organizations.

Alongside of this, the quality of the "human potential" will have to be improved; it will involve first of all rejuvenating rural labor. At the present time, 70 percent of the workers in the self-managed sector are more than 50 years old; 30 to 40 percent continue to work past the retirement age. The minister declares, beginning in 1981, the farms will receive several thousand young people who have had suitable training. On the other hand, the advances made by production in these new "viable" operations, will make it possible through the distribution of regular bonuses, to improve wages, which now are poor, on the whole.

Housing and Self-construction

If, in the self-managed sector as elsewhere, an effort must be made for housing, a special case appears there whose solution has only been put off too long. The accommodations of the settlers and the operating personnel of not long ago have been occupied after independence not only by farm workers continuing to work on the property, but also by a number of persons, who were and remained completely unconnected with it. Thus we can mention a self-managed property which has 1,300 dwellings, of which 480 are now occupied by "parasites," who not only do no work on this property, but consume water and electricity at its expense and, moreover, have for the most part jobs or income which should allow them to house themselves at their own expense. Welfare measures are envisaged for those tenants who are really needy, but an effort is being made from now on to recover the largest part of these misappropriated lodgings and to assign them to genuine agricultural workers.

In a general way, the rural habitat will enjoy priority. In this matter the minister thinks the UNPA /National Union of Algerian Peasants/ should play an important role of encouragement.

Self-construction should be promoted, however, it will only be a genuine solution to the extent where a suitable supply of materials will allow avoiding the threatening demands of the parallel market: at the present time, brick sells at 4 dinars or about Fr 5, and a bag of cement at 34 dinars or more than Fr 40. The CAPCS /Communal Multi-Service Agricultural Cooperative/ organizations should, under the circumstances, play a decisive role in supplying small projects cheaply: if that can be achieved, the peasant will not have any more need for building, other than modest state financial aid.

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Organizations and Training

Actually a great deal should be expected from cooperatives and services; but Selim Saadi recognizes that some things can only be accomplished with time: "there are, he declares, stages to inevitably go through before achieving a proper assimilation of the cooperative movement at all levels." But he thinks that is one more reason to undertake immediately the necessary changes.

The reorganization of the supply channels of agricultural farms is based, first of all, on a simplification of basic cooperative organizations; then on support, on the wilaya level, of the cooperative which operates on the commune level; finally, on the control of the producers, which will have to extend to all these organizations.

Personnel, which is often excessive, will be reduced. The creation of a supply office, acting as a purchasing center will facilitate price regulation. Port offices will insure the direct shipping of imported merchandise, fertilizer, in particular, to the wilayas. A cooperation institute will train cadres and managers: The latter are particularly in short supply.

Finally, they will see to it that the graduates of the various agricultural training organizations are really absorbed by agriculture to a very great extent, while at the present time most of them gravitate towards other jobs, for example, administration; 85 percent of the technicians graduated from the National Agricultural Institute work elsewhere than in agriculture. And those who are involved with agricultural questions do so in offices, avoiding most often going out into the fields; the minister intends that from now on these theoreticians are going to often come in contact with reality.

Marketing: A Free Choice

Marketing of agricultural products is one of the obvious weak points of Algerian agriculture; the organizations, under the circumstances, have proved to be ineffective. The minister declares, it is necessary to give the producer from now on the right to sell his products as he wishes, allowing him a choice between the free market and state organizations; he thus will be freed from those organizations, which he has not ceased complaining about for years.

Nevertheless, these organizations will continue to be improved; the state has invested a great deal in them, they can supply almost a third of the annual production of fruits and vegetables, but it is necessary to train the corresponding personnel: warehouse keepers, accountants, managers and not allow an excessive number of people who are almost illiterate to remain as now.

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Some fruit and vegetable cooperatives employ 180 persons at their headquarters and they are genuine parasites, whose expense the producers bear unjustifiably. The CAPCs which had as their main function supplying instruments and means of production and only had to market marginal products, have made this secondary function their main assignment, because individual interests have operated in this direction and consequently their transport facilities were lacking to supply producers; it will be necessary to return these organizations to their main purpose of "services."

Small Peasantry and Agrarian Revolution

Selim Saadi declared flatly that the small peasants had only received very little assistance up until recently; they were confused, quite wrongly, with the agrarian feudal system. A completely different policy is going to be followed with respect to this sector, which, neglected as it is, is nonetheless the most productive group in Algerian agriculture and it could do much better if it was properly helped. From 5,000 to 6,000 tractors are going to be delivered this year to the small peasants, or the equivalent of what they have received in the last decade. The effort in the field of small hydraulics will be increased sevenfold.

Of course, the RA [Agrarian Revolution] which is one of the government's major decisions, will be continued, but more strictly. The first and second stage of the RA, that is to say, distribution among the destitute peasants of estate lands and surplus private properties, says the minister, should have ended after 1976 at least. A determined effort is now being made to successfully conclude them. According to the reports of the wilayas, 90 percent of the land, including 95 percent of the usable surface, has been distributed, and many cases are no longer in doubt; a final inspection has just been assured on the spot by the members of the national RA committee, who, moreover, have confirmed that due to lack of qualified personnel, the files were not up to date in some people's communal assemblies.

A technical commission, including, among others, land survey register officials, cartographers etc, has consequently been created by the national RA commission to carry out the final inspections in the communes. The definite termination of the second and third stage will take place on 15 September 1981.

Regarding the very widespread criticism in public opinion, Selim Saadi recognized that some awards have been made illegally, without the appeals commissions having the time to make a decision. Nevertheless, few restorations have taken place and if the total surface of the national RA fund has been reported as decreasing, it is not, as is often claimed, because of restorations made in favor of

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private owners, which have remained very minimal, but because of survey revisions which have led to changes in not very precise estimates.

The third stage of the RA which involves steppe and desert areas, will only be considered again, after the final conclusion of the first and second stage, for it will require all the available "human potential." Censuses, prospecting, collection of data will begin in 1981 and we can expect a beginning of implementation in 1982, if everything goes well.

A special institution will concentrate on livestock raising problems. A geo-botanical study of the potentialities of the steppe is going to be conducted with Soviet technical assistance; the plant opportunities alone will make it possible to determine the situation of each cooperative. The minister points out, "the steppe exists in a very fragile balance;" we must avoid every risk of destruction of this equilibrium and study thoroughly problems of infrastructure, collective equipment, hydraulics, sedentarization, etc. An "arrangement to support the third stage" will be set up to counteract the unusual situations which could develop, for example, from climatic hazards.

The South, says Selim Saadi, is the country's future. But before proceeding with the conquest of the "vast spaces," we must put on a profitable basis the lands which we have available, for example, in the mountains, where there is abundant rainfall. These considerations are an indication of the realism and frankness with which agricultural problems are now approached in Algeria.

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ALGERIA

BRIEFS

FOREIGN BASES--Within the framework of the foreign policy line spelled out before the National Assembly a few days previously by Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Seddik Benyahia, who said that "Algeria will never allow the establishment of imperialist military bases within its borders," the national daily EL MOUDJAHID stated on the front page of its 27 January edition Algeria's opposition to the setting up of any foreign base in Africa and its support for the "principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of nations" and the solution of African problems within "an exclusively African context." Writing in EL MOUDJAHID, Ahmed Hamouni, who considers the African continent "placed, in spite of itself, in the very center of gravity of a Western strategy of neocolonial dimensions," asks how genuine decolonization actually is and deplores the fact that countries "are hanging on to the colonizing order of the occupier." After denouncing a foreign economic omnipresence "which necessarily determines any policy, whether on the scale of the continent or on the larger scale of international relations," and a supposedly "dissuasive" military presence, he declares that "the destabilization of Africa is maintained by the presence, at different spots of the continent, of foreign bases that feed disturbances and conflicts, whether they be on borders or within nations." He takes a negative position on the question of whether or not the "enfeoffed countries can truly work for the well-being of their peoples when their entire policy is dictated from foreign capitals." The Algerian daily emphasizes the need "to get rid of the totally reactionary blinkers which mean that in terms of specific interests -- never those of the people -- there will be a mass reaction to certain events shrewdly arranged for unavowed purposes." "Inversely," EL MOUDJAHID writes, "the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of nations, in keeping with the charter of the OAU, must find its full meaning in a whole series of both bilateral and multilateral measures that will prevent and eliminate from our continent any foreign interventionism which uses disturbances as a pretext, disturbances that must be solved within an exclusively African framework: Gafsa, Chad, Zaire, the Western Sahara, and so on." [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 300] 11,464

FRENCH VISIT--A delegation from the CNPF (National Council of French Employers), headed by its president, Francois Ceyrac, visited Algeria from 23 to 25 January seeking information on possibilities of cooperation between Algeria and France. The French delegation was received by several ministers: Abdelhamid Brahimi, minister of planning and national development; Mohamed Liassine, minister of heavy industry; Said Ait Messaoudene, minister of light industry; Belkacem Nabi, minister of energy and the petrochemical industries. It also investigated possibilities

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of cooperation that would benefit small and medium-size enterprises within the framework of the 1980-1984 Plan. Prospects of cooperation do exist between the two countries, particularly in the field of training, maintenance and construction, emphasizes the national agency ALGERIE PRESSE SERVICE, which announced that French sectorial delegations are to come to Algeria to discuss concrete possibilities with Algerian officials from the different sectors and later formulate proposals based on the objectives of the 5-year plan. As we announced, Ceyrac's visit to Algiers will be followed soon by the establishment within the CNPF of an Algerian Committee to be headed by Paul Berliet, vice president of Renault Industrial Vehicles (RVI). The constituent meeting of the Algerian Committee will take place at 1700 hours on 10 February at the headquarters of the CNPF (31 Avenue Pierre 1^{er} de Serbie, Paris 16). It will be open to all enterprises and professional organizations that are interested (MARCHES TROPICAUX, 23 January, p 182). [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 300] 11,464

AIR STRIKE--Following a strike by Air Algerie flight crews, traffic of the national company was totally interrupted at the Houari Boumediene Airport on Wednesday, 28 January, from 0000 to 1700 hours. Work resumed after officials agreed to examine demands being made by the flight crews, which are asking for a revision of provisions made in July 1979 resulting from an initial work stoppage. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 300] 11,464

LETTER FROM REAGAN--President Chadli Benjedid has received a message from President Ronald Reagan congratulating him on Algeria's "invaluable participation" in the solution to the problem of the American hostages in Tehran. "For the American people and the world, Algeria will long represent that rare combination of compassion and competence of which you have every right to be proud," the new President of the United States wrote. On 29 January, President Reagan stated that the United States would honor the obligations stemming from the Algerian agreement on the freeing of the hostages, but on the condition that these obligations be in keeping with international and American law. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 300] 11,464

OIL NEGOTIATIONS--The CFP [French Petroleum Company] has reached an agreement with Algeria on the delivery of 3 million tons of crude for 1981, but negotiations continue to try to achieve the supply level of preceding years, 10 million tons, indicated the AFP [FRENCH PRESS AGENCY] according to an informed source in Paris. A company spokesman confirmed that a renewable contract had been signed with SONATRACH for 60,000 barrels for 1981. SONATRACH reportedly demanded only the official price, \$40.00 a barrel. "Total" hopes to obtain the same tonnage as called for in the 5-year contract which expired 31 December 1980, approximately 10 million tons a year. (See "Marches Tropicaux et Meditteraneens" 9 Jan 81, p 72.) [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 Jan 81 p 240] 9479

GAS TALKS--A French delegation headed by Mr Capron, director of the French Ministry of Industry, arrived in Algiers late last week, to hold talks with the Algerian delegation led by Mr Boussena; it continues negotiations on the price of gas delivered by SONATRACH to Gas of France. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 30 Jan 81 p 240] 9479

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GAS NEGOTIATIONS STALLED--Negotiations between SONATRACH and a Gas of France delegation, which resumed at the beginning of the last week in December 1980, are still stalled because both parties are sticking to their previous positions. Although SONATRACH continues to carry out the contract to supply liquified gas, even though it only delivered 2.5 billion cubic meters in 1980 instead of the 4 billion called for in the contract, SONATRACH might reduce the tonnage of crude delivered to the CFP [French Petroleum Company.] Until 31 December 1980, according to a contract signed in 1971 and renewed in 1975, the CFP could take between 6 to 12 million tons of crude each year under the "right to oil." SONATRACH supposedly is willing to renew this contract while doing away with this right to oil, but renewal depends on reaching an agreement with Gas of France on the price of liquified gas (See "Marches Tropicaux et Mediterraneens," 7 Nov 80, p 2955). Unless such an agreement is reached, SONATRACH might reduce the volume of crude for the CFP for the rest of 1981 to 3 million tons. SONATRACH suspended its contract with the American company "El Paso" on providing 10 billion cubic meters a year. Negotiations between the two companies are expected to resume in the next few days. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 9 Jan 81 p 72] 9479

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IRAN

RESULTS OF 2 YEARS OF REVOLUTION REVIEWED

London 8 DAYS in English 14 Feb 81 pp 7,8,10,13

[Article by Tim McGirk: "Year 3--Building the Islamic Revolution"]

[Text] It was perhaps fitting that the release of the 52 hostages should usher in the third year of Iran's Islamic revolution. The taking of the hostages was a symbol of Iran's rejection of everything that went with the years spent under the twin shadows of Reza Pahlavi and 'Great Satan.' But the length of time they were held is a reflection of the country's very real and present dilemma: the power struggle between the 'westernised' and 'clerical' factions. The outcome of this power play will determine the way Iran changes--or disdains to change--in the third year of its revolution. In concluding his analysis of Iran at the crossroads, Tim McGirk detects signs of a 'new pragmatism' inside Tehran.

BY 11 FEBRUARY 1979, it was all over. The imperial army had surrendered, the Shah had been chased into exile, and the frail octogenarian who inspired it all, Ayatollah Khomeini, had declared a new Islamic republic in Iran. With the possible exception of the Carter administration, nobody was more surprised by the speed of the Shah's fall than his own Lilliputian subjects.

After the Mossadeqh coup in 1953, Iranians believed that the Peacock Throne stood granite-solid, as unshakeable as the Elburz mountains that shadow Tehran.

Now the Pahlavis are gone, and so are the 52 American hostages, whose 14-month captivity isolated Iran and frightened away useful trading partners. In many ways, the third year of the Iranian revolution may be the most crucial yet. Iran is snared in a costly five-month battle with neighbouring Iraq, and within its own government, two often-colliding ideologies are engaged in a

deadly tug-of-war.

The clerical fundamentalists, who rule the Majlis and the legal courts, and hold the top cabinet portfolios, have rejected western technology and seem determined to impose on Iran a 'Quranic' self-sufficiency, brutally if necessary. 'Neither East nor West' is the slogan of the fundamentalist Islamic Republican Party.

The moderates on the other side, led by secular President Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, also recognise that under the Shah Iran's over-heated economy had become dangerously reliant on the United States, Europe and Japan. However, while Bani Sadr's followers want to scale down outside trade, they also realise that for several more decades, Iran's survival depends on the exchange of one commodity — oil — for others that for the most part this barren country, criss-crossed by mountains and bleak desert, cannot grow or make itself.

The Tehran newspaper *Azadegan*

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recently summed up the government split. 'The clergy,' it said, 'represents the traditional type of Iranian who wants to have little to do with the West, and even wants to go back to the old way of life. On the other side, you have the liberal intellectuals who have perhaps been educated in the West, and who would like to see Iran develop along western lines.'

This quarrelling between revolutionary factions has hampered the campaign to drive Iraqi troops from Iran's Khuzestan province. It also complicated the long overdue release of the US hostages, and has stunned Iran's post-revolution recovery.

Underneath Iran's scorching anti-western rhetoric lies an appalling mess of figures: Iran's gross national product has tumbled 20 per cent since the revolution; a war-shortage of spare parts and raw materials has cut industrial capacity in the same period by 30 per cent; European bankers, even after Iran used part of its unfrozen national assets to pay off \$3.7bn in old debts, still regard the Khomeini regime as a bad credit risk; and unemployment in Iran, while no reliable official statistics exist, reportedly still runs as high as three million — around 25 per cent.

Allegations are rife that certain prominent revolutionary Iranians are skimming off profits from the discounted sale of crude by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). Reports from Tehran claim that these figures, which allegedly include a former Cabinet minister and a relative of a leading clergyman in the Majlis, are demanding that Iran's clients deposit a certain commission on every barrel into numbered Swiss bank accounts. Iran's agriculture has been similarly afflicted. Ayatollah Khomeini reportedly halted a controversial scheme for redistributing land belonging to feudal landlords after accusations that several influential clergymen had prevented peasants from receiving millions of hectares in unused farm land.

A businessman operating on Tehran's black market had an explanation for the current wave of profiteering. 'After you've had the revolutionary guards take possession of your house, all the Persian carpets and everything, you realise that the only safe place for your income is outside Iran,' he told *8 Days*.

Obviously, the arbitrary arrests and the government's internal fractures aren't

exactly a boon to investors. But judging from Tehran's handling of the hostage crisis, there are signs of a new pragmatism in the Khomeini regime, a recognition that the internecine struggle between moderates and fundamentalists will only continue aggravating Iran's economic ills.

At first, the fundamentalists' hostage exchange deal with Washington was predictably attacked by Iran's moderate president. When informed that Iran had settled for a return of only \$2.8bn instead of its original 'security' deposit of \$24bn, Bani Sadr jeered that the fundamentalists 'thought nobody in Iran would be reading the fine print.' He then let fire in the newspaper *Islamic Revolution*: 'Why did we solve this (hostage) problem from a position of weakness and humiliation instead of strength? What surprises us is how these gentlemen can say Iran is victorious.'

However, this time the blistering accusations stopped at the daily front pages. Bani Sadr's aides refrained from opening a Majlis investigation into the hostage deal, and also from voicing their complaints direct to Ayatollah Khomeini. Since the 52 Americans' release on 20 January, Iran's revolutionary leader has scarcely mentioned the hostage issue.

There are indications that Khomeini, reportedly suffering from heart trouble, is pulling back from public life. After a scuffle broke out in the crowd waiting near Khomeini's North Tehran home recently, authorities banned well-wishers from visiting the ailing ayatollah without an appointment.

So far, neither Khomeini nor his fundamentalist followers have acted to curb the stream of foreign businessmen who began arriving a few hours after the hostages flew from Tehran, and the West's ineffectual trade ban against Iran was finally lifted. First arrivals at Tehran airport were traders from Japan, which lifted 520,000 barrels a day (b/d) until April last year, when a 12-company Japanese consortium broke a long-term contract after Iran tried to increase prices.

'Getting an open telephone line from Tokyo to Tehran has been impossible,' complained one Japanese oil trader last week. 'They've been booked solid since at least two days before the hostages flew home.' Top priority on the Japanese agenda is establishing what are Iran's plans for the war-battered Bandar Khomeini

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petrochemical plant. Technicians assessing the damage at Bandar Khomeini, which was hit several times by aerial attacks in the opening shots of the war, claim that repairing the plant completely will cost \$4.8bn, double original estimates. Mitsui, which led the construction consortium of five Japanese firms, completed 85 per cent of the project before the war began.

Fast on the heels of the Japanese have been the Europeans. Italian firms are expected to capture an estimated \$3bn in construction contracts and export goods this year. The Talbot car company of the UK, the Chrysler subsidiary recently acquired by Peugeot, has agreed to resume supplies of automobile kits for assembly at the Isfahan plant.

More crucial for Iran is the return of two big European oil companies, British Petroleum and Shell. The Dutch oil company, the first major western purchaser that Iran picked up after the economic embargo was lifted, reportedly now buys about 100,000 b/d. British Petroleum officials last week were in Tehran for talks on resuming deliveries. Before the two companies cancelled their Iranian contracts last April — again, over a price dispute — they together lifted 250,000 b/d.

European oilmen who recently met officials from NIOC were informed that the state-run firm intends to push up production gradually to 3m b/d, of which at least 2.5m b/d will be marked for export. At present, Iran pumps between 700,000 and 900,000 b/d. These oilmen reject the theory that to reach these levels Iran must waive its ban on foreign, and particularly American, petroleum expertise and spare parts. 'When Khomeini booted out the oil companies everyone was predicting that Iran's oil would silt up completely,' said one oilman. He added grudgingly, 'The ingenuity of these Iranians has been a constant surprise to us.'

Mistakes, and bad ones, were made in the Khuzestan oilfields after foreign experts left. At the offshore Kharg Island loading terminal, an Iranian technician reportedly blew up a giant crude storage tank by simply opening the wrong valve, according to petroleum industry sources in London. 'When the war started, they tried to blame the damage on Iraqi bombers,' the sources said.

Two years after the revolution, the Iranians have mastered their oilfields, and

several European oilmen claim that, barring an all-out Iraqi bombing raid in Khuzestan, NIOC can indeed pump 3m b/d without needing to have the 'satanic' US firms back. A few months ago, Bani Sadr put thousands of urgently needed parts of oilfield equipment on display in a huge convention hall and, blithely ignoring international patent laws, called on assembled mechanics and inventors to build the equipment, promising cash on the table. Government purchases of these inventions so far amount to \$150m. Furthermore, the revolutionary regime has been able to cannibalise equipment left in the Khuzestan oilfields from the time when Iran under the Shah produced over 5m b/d.

But there may nevertheless be a hitch. Most of these spares are stored in large warehouses at Abadan, which is now besieged by Iraqi troops, and it is possible that they may already have been spirited off to Baghdad for repairing Iraq's own war-blasted oilfields. Iraqi troops reportedly have already hauled several million-dollar Iranian oil rigs across their border.

If this equipment is inaccessible, Iran may approach US oil firms like Brown & Root, Halliburton, Reed Tool and Lummus which supply high-technology pumps, valves, drilling bits, services, and petroleum computer equipment. War with Iraq has sobered Iran's revolutionary zeal, even to the point of taking on South Africa as a crude customer. In the London commodities market, persistent reports are circulating that Iran, now desperate for cash customers, sells spot crude through a well-known broker for South Africa.

On Iran's list of demons, South Africa probably comes in joint third with Israel, behind Iraq and the United States. If it needs the equipment, Iran may even scratch the US off the list. Or, more simply, it may just purchase the US hardware through a European agent, probably Belgium. However, obtaining spare parts for its largely US-equipped armed forces may be more difficult.

Following the stories of the hostages' alleged ill-treatment by their Iranian captors, a recent poll in the US showed that most Americans consider Iran America's Public Enemy No. 1 — including even the Soviet Union. It seems unlikely that Reagan will quickly unblock \$400m worth of arms already paid for.

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In an interview with the *New York Times*, former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia James Akins argued that a renewal of relations with Iran would 'alienate all the Arab nations'. He said: 'There would certainly be a backlash in Iraq and in the entire Arabian Peninsula, including Saudi Arabia. They've assumed for a long time that the United States would behave rationally, would base its Middle East policy on its own interests, and break away from the exclusive Israel-Iran alliance. If we cozy up to an Iranian regime that is viciously hostile to the Arabs -- namely, the mullahs -- those assumptions may change rapidly. The Arabs could well conclude that the United States was hopelessly committed to their enemies.'

However, the Washington intelligentsia is as sharply divided over Iran as the Persians are about restoring valuable trade links with the US. Political scientist Professor Amos Perlmutter argues that Washington should move for immediate cooperation with Iran. 'Iran's political and territorial integrity is vastly more important than our quarrels with any specific regime,' he claims. 'That means we must sit with whatever regime is in power in Tehran. We should draw distinctions between the regime, which we detest, and the territory itself. In that respect, we have to isolate the mullahs somewhat and assist moderate forces that may eventually replace them. Until then, potential dismemberment of Iran constitutes the greatest single political, military and economic threat that America faces today.'

Whatever stiff policy the Reagan administration adopts on Iran, American traders will search long and hard for loopholes. Iran's import bill, a whopping \$18bn during the last year of the Shah's reign, may have dipped to \$11bn, but the country still remains one of the most lucrative business markets in the Middle East.

As a result, Iran can afford to be choosy. Deputy premier Behzad Nabavi, the fundamentalist who negotiated the hostages' release and who now acts as government troubleshooter, explained that the current regime aims at 'getting the economy going again without increasing Iran's dependence'. Nabavi, a former cell-mate of Premier Mohammed Ali Rajai

during the Shah's rule, indicated that in the third year of Iran's revolution, successful foreign bidders will be those who pare down imports of equipment and manpower to a bare minimum. Contracts that include Iranian jobs will have top priority.

So far, the Khomeini regime has been unable to stop runaway unemployment. For the second year running, Iran has the 'problem' of not being able to spend development money fast enough; the slow progress of a bank investment scheme has stalled the allotment of funds for labour-intensive construction and agricultural reform. Iran's government allocated \$10.3bn for development for the year to April, but spending so far amounts to only \$4.6bn, according to official central bank figures. Meanwhile, work on 1,000 semi-finished construction sites and half-built factories remains idle until the other \$5.7bn clears government red tape.

In contract bidding, non-aligned and socialist firms, judging by Tehran's statistics, will have an edge over western suppliers. Since the revolution, Iran's trade with the Eastern bloc has doubled to \$1.4bn, though the western economic boycott may partly explain this increase.

They agree on little else, but Premier Rajai and his rival, President Bani Sadr, at least concur on the subject of restrictions for foreign trade. The Iranian government acted to control 'imported' inflation by nationalising all trade companies. Already, over half of these companies are now in government hands, and a bill for more across-the-board nationalisation comes before the Majlis this month.

Nationalisation is a hot political issue in Iran. Strict government control of overseas trade is vigorously opposed by the bazaar merchants, whose anti-Shah food strikes helped topple the monarchy. The current regime feels the bazaaris must be curbed -- their over-pricing and black marketeering has fuelled Iran's inflation -- but Tehran is concerned that a withdrawal of the merchants' crucial support for the mullahs might lead to a government collapse.

Trapped in a lengthy war with Iraq, and shaken by a potentially explosive government crisis, Iran remains a strictly enter-at-your-risk territory for western businessmen. But the risk may well be worth it.

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IRAQ

BRITON, OTHERS DETAINED AS POW'S BY KURDISH REBELS

LD201217 London THE TIMES in English 20 Feb 81 p 6

[Hazhir Teimourian report: "Kurds Say Detained Briton is a Prisoner of War"]

[Text] A London spokesman for the Unified Kurdistan Socialist Party yesterday described Mr Michael Powell, a Briton, and eight other foreigners held by his party in north-east Iraq as prisoners of war.

According to the spokesman Mr Powell worked on a water supply project for an army supply project for an army barracks in the Kurdish Province Sulaimanieh. He and the others, who are four Indians, three Lebanese and an Egyptian dentist, were captured in a raid on the area last month by Peshmergah partisans under the command of Dr Mahmoud Osman, a former deputy to the late General Mustapha Barzani, the Kurdish leader.

The socialist party's spokesman added that terms for the release of the captured men had already been sent to the Iraqi authorities, which included the release of the families of men fighting in the ranks of the Peshmergah.

Judging by past conduct, the captives will be treated kindly. In the past, Russians, Czechs and Poles have similarly fallen into Kurdish hands and have been set free after a few weeks' detention in the Kurds' mountain strongholds.

Certainly Dr Mahmoud Osman, who describes himself as a democratic socialist, was well liked by many Western journalists who visited him during the Iraqi-Kurdish war of 1974-75.

His forces have been growing rapidly during the past two years, largely as a result of defections from the other two Kurdish organizations fighting the government of President Saddam Husayn.

These are the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, under the command of Mr Jalal Talabani, another former deputy to General Barzani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by General Barzani's sons.

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LEBANON

WALID JUNBLAT DISCUSSES POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO LEBANON'S CRISIS

Junblat's New Formula

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 2-8 Jan 81 pp 20-23

[Text] Walid Junblat tells AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, "There are no conditions for the dialogue with the Lebanese Front."

"Our objective is to persuade the other group that it is wrong to deal with Israel."

"The people of al-Damur have the right to return to their property. We will find for the Palestinians land that is closer than al-Bisariyah."

"The Chamber of Deputies no longer represents the people. We must have new elections before the end of this year."

"Amal's posture vis a vis the government yielded negative results."

"Every political settlement in the Gulf must respect Iraq's legitimate rights."

Ever since he declared that "Dialogue with the Lebanese Front was inescapable," Mr Walid Junblat, president of the Lebanese National Movement has rushed to the surface of events a new equation that bears some features of a detente. The formula with which the president of the Socialist Progressive Party proclaimed his willingness to engage in a dialogue appeared as though it were an extension of an established course to which the party has been committed for the past years, or it appeared to be an urgent mission to take steps to forestall the dangers that are threatening Lebanon more than any other time.

It is evident that Walid Junblat is more qualified than others for launching the national dialogue. He is a Druze leader from al-Shuf; he comes from an old, respectable family; and he inherited from his father relations of confidence with the national progressive parties and with the Palestinian Resistance. Junblat

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established balanced relations with a number of Sunni and Shi'ite Islami- leaders and personalities as well as with officials in Beirut and Damascus. His position as a spokesman would be strengthened by his moderation in basic positions and his flexibility in dealing with numerous questions that are the subject of dispute among the Lebanese themselves and between the Lebanese and the Palestinians. He accepts no alternative to the legitimate government, but at the same time he asks the Palestinians to abide by the Cairo Agreement and to return to the camps. Among the residents of al-Jubayl, most of whom are Druzes and Maronites, Junblat does not forget to press the Lebanese formula of coexistence.

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI met the president of the National Movement and asked him about his opinion of the new Lebanese and Arab developments. We asked him about the ranges of the appeal he had made and about his view of the features of the coming stage following the limited confidence vote that was given in the Chamber of Deputies to the cabinet of Attorney Shafiq al-Wazzan.

The interview was at 12 o'clock noon in Junblat's house in al-Musaytibah. A group of men was scattered to guard the entrance [to the street] and the neighboring streets. Junblat was on the second floor [of the house], wearing his black leather jacket and his blue jeans; his eyeglasses were hanging from the buttonhole of his shirt. The furniture in the room was simple, just as the late father of the family had left it. Pictures of Kamal Junblat, depicting stages of his life, were hanging everywhere on the walls.

We spoke in somewhat of a hurry about everything: the covenant, the dialogue, the army, the South, al-Damur, the Iraqi-Iranian war and a few international questions. The text of the interview follows.

[Question] It's been 5 years since the war began. How do you see the future of Lebanon?

[Answer] At the present time it is difficult to forecast the future of Lebanon. The reasons for the crisis still exist. This is a premature question.

First, a Political Agreement

[Question] Following the recent clashes that occurred among some groups of the National Movement, how can matters be arranged in such a manner that would forestall these clashes in the future?

[Answer] What happened is not a permanent situation. The clash occurred after the death of two prominent leaders, who are Bashir 'Ubayd and Kamal Khayr Bey. Their death was the result of the death of al-Haj Munir Fathah. At any rate, there is an idea that may achieve a tighter organizational formula with which we can take steps to avoid [the situation of] resorting to weapons and the deterioration we have reached. The new organizational formula is being discussed, but before it is approved, an agreement must be reached on basic political principles.

[Question] Are there early signs of an agreement over this formula?

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[Answer] We cannot say that there is an agreement. We are in the process of studying and discussing [the proposed formula] even though there is a partial agreement over 70 percent of the principles.

[Question] What are the points that you have already discussed?

[Answer] The Lebanese situation with its details--and it has many details. And we also discussed the Arab situation and the international position.

[Question] Were the responsibilities investigated and defined after the recent clashes between the nationalist Syrians and the independent Nasirists--al-Murabitun?

[Answer] An investigative committee has been working, and a number of suspects have been suspended. We are [still] awaiting the completion of the investigation.

[Question] Who was suspended?

[Answer] I do not mention names.

[Question] What about the continuing excesses in West Beirut?

[Answer] The excesses have decreased sharply after the offices were closed.

[Question] Have you found a formula for consolidating the national battle?

[Answer] We must reach that stage not on the basis of [having] "joint forces," but rather on the basis of [having] "united forces." It would be natural for such a stage to be preceded by an absolute political agreement.

[Question] Is some attempt being made [to achieve] an inter-Lebanese accord in the foreseeable future?

[Answer] Whose accord with whom? I have not heard of this subject.

[Question] What if the president's conciliatory message, for example, is approved by the various groups?

[Answer] This is an old story. It is true that they approved it, but the Lebanese Front group violated it in practice and opposed it on the field.

[Question] How?

[Answer] 'Ayn al-Rummanah is the proof that the Lebanese Front, or the Phalangist Party and the Lebanese forces in particular, does not want any accord and does not want a state.

[Question] The Lebanese forces are saying that West Beirut is succumbing to the Syrian and Palestinian occupation and that it has no real spokesman.

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[Answer] This is not true. On our part we can make the same statement. We too are calling for a capable spokesman. Who will he be? Will it be Camille Sahm'un or the Phalangist Party?

Dialogue with No Conditions

[Question] In an interview with al-Shaykah Amin al-Jumayyil that preceded the "France en Terre" broadcast you said that cooperation with the Phalangists was not being considered because the Phalangists were cooperating with Israel. How can this obstacle be overcome today?

[Answer] Having relations with Israel is a major obstacle, but we cannot set preconditions for the dialogue such as suspending relations with Israel. One of the objectives of the dialogue is to persuade the other party that such relations are erroneous and dangerous. We will not set preconditions so that matters will not become more complex than they are already.

[Question] Most of your answers are brief. You answer in few words.

[Answer] Did anyone tell you that I like to talk? I do not like to talk. I say a few words if I have something to say.

[Question] People are fed up. They are waiting for a solution; they are waiting for a dialogue that would lead to some solution. What are the conditions of the National Movement for a new national accord formula?

[Answer] The National Movement has clarified its conditions in the memorandum that was read at the Beau Rivage Hotel on 14 February 1980. President Sarkis relied on this memorandum in his conciliatory message. In the opinion of the National Movement these conditions guarantee a political solution, but they are not enough to prevent upsets and wars in the future. What is required is a developing political system.

[Question] What are your plans for developing this system?

[Answer] Our ideas are always derived from the step-by-step political program that was devised by the founder and the leader of the National Movement, Kamal Junblat.

[Question] But this program goes back to 1975?

[Answer] I consider it an advanced step that would move Lebanon into a sound political climate, achieve sound political representation of all the activities and remove the traces of the civil war and the deadly effects of sectarianism in Lebanon.

[Question] How is the relationship between the National Movement and the Palestinian Resistance?

[Answer] It is a good relationship. There is nothing wrong with it.

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[Question] What about the south? What is the National Movement doing to protect the residents of South Lebanon from the daily shelling and from the agony of homelessness?

[Answer] South Lebanon is the subject of an international dispute. It is an Arab-Israeli dispute and not a local dispute. The damages, of course, are tremendous, but the forced evacuation of residents is not the result of the presence of Palestinians or the National Movement. It is the result of the shelling by Sa'd Haddad who is backed by Israel.

[Question] But Israel will continue to shell the area. Why aren't places of refuge being built to protect civilians?

[Answer] The South is part of a whole. As I said it is an Arab responsibility.

[Question] Is there in fact a plan to bring back the residents of al-Damur to their town?

[Answer] The subject of al-Damur is part of the subject of the evacuees. Al-Khiyam, for example, al-Nab'ah and al-Dakunah have been evacuated, and there are many reasons for this. Al-Damur, however, is a very important matter because not all the Christians of al-Damur are separatists. The major error that we committed was the wholesale forced evacuation, the theft and the plunder we carried out; we made people homeless. This was a grievous error that must be remedied today not only by bringing back the nationalists to the town, but also by unconditionally bringing back all the residents of al-Damur to the town. A Lebanese citizen who owns a house in al-Damur, al-Dakunah or al-Karantinah has the right to return to his property. How can a Lebanese citizen be deprived of his property? The problems of the Palestinians in al-Damur must be solved through an agreement with the PLO in a manner that would preserve the minimum of an honorable life for the Palestinians. The Palestinian may object to going to al-Bisariyah, and I can understand that objection, but we can help him find other areas that are closer than al-Bisariyah.

[Question] Is there an alternative plan?

[Answer] We want to offer an alternative solution. We shall see. But this, as I said before, would take place through coordination with the PLO, the Lebanese government and the parties that are on the scene.

[Question] How would you comment on Ronald Reagan being in the White House?

[Answer] First, what do I have to do with the U.S. elections? The U.S. policy continues on its well-known course. Some details may change, but at the present time I see no changes.

Who Takes Notice of Lebanon?

[Question] A solution in Jordan is being discussed. Will this help keep partition away from Lebanon?

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[Answer] What Lebanon? Who is taking notice of Lebanon? Can you find Lebanon on the map of the United States? Lebanon in its entirety does not equal one quarter of a borough in New York! We attach more importance than we should to Lebanon, and the world sees nothing of this Lebanon.

[Question] We are Lebanese, and it is our right to think of our destiny, [is it not]?

[Answer] Provided that we do not magnify our ambitions, our presence and our worth. The world is preoccupied with more important problems.

[Question] Does this mean that the world forgot us?

[Answer] I don't know.

[Question] What do you think of the Syrian-Libyan plan for unity?

[Answer] This rapprochement is good. Any Arab unification plan is ultimately good and beneficial if its objective is to strengthen Arab steadfastness against Israel and if it takes the essence of the question into consideration. On this basis it is beneficial for the cause, for the Arabs and for the world.

[Question] Some people are calling for terminating the mission of the deterrent forces in Lebanon. Are you among those?

[Answer] We cannot determine the term of the mandate for the deterrent forces. We support the extension for the forces until the legitimate forces can complete their equipment and their preparations. As far as we are concerned the question is settled.

[Question] What about the Lebanese army and the new defense bill?

[Answer] There is a defense bill and there is a bill to penalize military officials who were responsible for the collapse of the army in 'Ayn al-Rummanah. Those people must be punished, and they must be dismissed from the service. After new leaders are selected, we can resume our examination of the army bill. Furthermore, as a party we object to the new bill because it does not meet its purpose. There are no powers whatsoever in this bill for the general staff. All the powers of the chief of staff in the previous law were turned over to the commander of the army and then directly or indirectly to the minister of defense. Because ministers of defense have nothing to gain from the military establishment, these powers were turned again to the commander.

[Question] What about the powers of the Supreme Defense Council?

[Answer] This council met once after the 'Ayn al-Rummanah story and has not met since then. It is necessary that this council meet periodically, but technical matters are more important. They are more important than the Defense Council or the general staff of the Military Council as staff. Ask any military expert you like, and you will get the same answer.

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[Question] Do the other parties also find defects in the Defense Bill?

[Answer] In what way?

[Question] It's being said that the powers of the commander of the army were allocated to the Supreme Council and that the Military Council was named the confessional council.

[Answer] I heard about this name, but this does not justify taking away the powers of the military staff.

I Do Not Support the Transfer of the Chamber

[Question] The war in Lebanon has not come to an end. However, politicians are finding time for making deals. After the Canadian wheat deal it was said that Deputy Munir Abu Fadil called for an investigation into the reasons why the new Chamber of Deputies building was not built. What do you think about that?

[Answer] Scandals are flourishing of course. The former cabinet has given much evidence of that. [Its term of office] was a chapter that was full of scandals. Some of its key figures have returned to the present cabinet. But the Chamber of Deputies is another matter. Regarding the new building, I was basically opposed to the idea of moving the old location.

[Question] Why?

[Answer] Because the old building is a great symbol. It is a symbol of history and independence; ultimately, it is a symbol of Lebanon. Why should we build a new building when the commissions for every requisition are known? At any rate the legislative authority does have many privileges. The deputies must be changed, and new elections must be held regardless of the cost.

[Question] Who would supervise the elections?

[Answer] The new elections would bring to the parliamentary chamber the real forces that can achieve an accord or a non-accord. The period that we are living in is very dangerous. Representatives of the people who have no relationship to the people should not be in the Chamber. This is illogical and illegal.

[Question] Constitutionally, do they not represent the people?

[Answer] No, No! this is not possible. The Chamber reconstitutes itself and derives its power from itself. It does not represent the people at all.

[Question] It is being said that there is a precedent [for that] in Britain because of the exigencies of war.

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[Answer] There is no similarity on the democratic scene between Lebanon and Britain. The difference is tremendous. Ultimately, we must have elections because in the final analysis it is this chamber that elects a new president. How can a chamber that bears no relationship to the people elect a president? The chamber today is spurious, and this spurious quality will be transferred to the presidency.

[Question] Does this chamber have the power to elect a new president?

[Answer] Certainly. It certainly has that power as long as it exists, unfortunately, and it is a legal miracle that it is still existing. At any rate all the Lebanese activists from the right and from the left have to agree on changing it so we can give it the value of representing the Lebanese people.

Iraq's Rights Are Legitimate

[Question] What do you think about the new government?

[Answer] A cabinet was formed that includes nationalist figures of a high moral and educational standing. There are, however, small gaps: some areas, for instance, have been deprived of representation, whereas other areas were quite well represented. The area of Zahlah, for example, is represented by three ministers. Representation could have been distributed over other areas.

[Question] What about the Shi'ite complex?

[Answer] My comment on this subject is as follows: despite my appreciation of and my understanding for the demands that the Amal Movement has made, the outcome that is being sought by those who are responsible for the party has yielded negative results. It has strengthened some of the centers of political feudalism in the South. If this is what is required, I regret that we reached this negative result.

Before the interview ended, I asked him about his opinion on the Iraqi-Iranian war. He said, "I support a political settlement between the two countries because the war is depleting their powers. I do respect Iraq's legitimate rights in Shatt al-'Arab and the pan-Arab rights in the Gulf."

Situation in Lebanon Explosive

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 2-8 Jan 81 pp 22-23

[Text] Circles close to al-Kaslik (The University of the Holy Spirit in Juniyah) are speaking about meetings that were held in Paris 3 months ago between Mr Walid Junblat and Abbot Butrus Qazi (on behalf of the Lebanese Front group). These meetings were tantamount to the dialogue that may take place between the Socialist Progressive Party and the Lebanese Forces.

These circles go so far as to identify three principal ideas that Abbot Qazi suggested for starting the dialogue. These ideas are as follows:

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1. Matters are to be settled in the area of al-Shuf by putting an end to all kinds of sectarian activity in a manner that would encourage the Christian residents of the area to return to their homes and their villages and to live beside their brothers, the Druzes.
2. Walid Junblat is to be considered responsible for protecting the Christians of the area, and a pledge to that effect is to be made. In return, he is to have a free hand in managing the affairs and the policies of the area.
3. This agreement is to be the starting point for looking into starting a dialogue between the Druzes and the Maronites to determine the role and the position of each [party] in finding a new formula for Lebanon.

It has not yet become clear whether or not direct meetings had taken place between Junblat and representatives of the Lebanese Front. However, the general developments in the Druze situation suggest that these meetings are no longer a plan for a dialogue and that they have reached a much more advanced stage.

The Druze organizations that concern themselves with research and development--and these include the representatives of the sect in the government, Marawan Hamadah, Khalid Junblat and Sami Yunis--held closed meetings to study the affairs and the positions of the sect under the present circumstances. They published a study on the subject and submitted it to the representatives and the figures of the sect, and they presented it to both Commander Majid Arsalan and Mr Walid Junblat.

What Do The Druzes Want?

The essence of the study is that "The basic problem that has continued to upset and erode the entity of Lebanon lies in the tradition that has hitherto been followed. This is the tradition of allocating leaderships and commands to specific sects. This tradition has created the feeling of injustice and deprivation and led us to the fragmentation and the divisiveness that is almost tearing us apart. It is therefore necessary that we find an alternative to this situation. It is our opinion that the position and the prestige of the presidency are such that we must liberate it from any narrow affiliation and accordingly from any subordination. The president should be elected directly by the people. His loyalty should be to the people only, and he should be free from the parliamentary maneuvers and from any trusteeship imposed on him. If the elected president is a member of one of the Christian sects, then the prime minister should be a member of one of the Muslim sects, and the opposite is true. The president's term should be 4 years and may be renewed once. In this case a prime minister is elected by a majority vote of the members of the Chamber of Deputies. The leadership position in the Chamber of Deputies remains open."

These organizations present a number of the Druzes' demands in case the situation remains unchanged regarding the allocation of the leadership positions. These demands are: the Druzes insist that one of the primary positions of leadership be given to a Druze. This is because ever since the Lebanese entity became known in history, the Druzes in Lebanon have constituted a basic pillar [of Lebanon]. The Druzes will not accept a situation in which their position in Lebanon would be like that of an intruder.

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The actions of Walid Junblat stem from [the position of] an inherited Druze leadership. So that he may be a competent and an effective spokesman, Junblat is trying to obtain an empowerment from the Palestinians authorizing him to engage in a dialogue and to devise the solution that he considers [appropriate] on the basis of the fact that the Palestinian Resistance influences Lebanese policy, and particularly the Western region, in one way or another.

There are many people, however--and these are observers who do not consider Walid Junblat's mission to be an easy one--who believe that the Palestinians will not object to such a dialogue because they do not have much confidence in its outcome. They have their own evaluations of the Lebanese scene and their own views of the solutions that deal particularly with their presence. Furthermore, the Syrians who are present [on the scene] have their own evaluations too.

The Discussion about Decentralization

On its part the Lebanese Front is living in fear of initiating any dialogue with those it calls the representatives of the other party in the western region. It is presenting itself as the "savior" of the Lebanese situation and the liberator of the Lebanese people from "the foreigners." The front believes that the road to this objective begins with correcting the image of the relationship between the Muslim and the Christian. This image was shaken during the events. The front affirms that such a correction can only take place by advocating a meeting and a dialogue to revive, save and unite Lebanon. Bashir al-Jumayyil lets no occasion go by without saying that the Christian "is extending a hand to the Lebanese Muslim" and that Lebanese Muslims "need Christian help to regain their unity, their freedom and their peace." Lebanon needs everybody to regain its unity, its independence and its sovereignty. When the commander of the Lebanese Forces wants to show his concern for the Muslim, he says that the forces of occupation--he means the Arab and Palestinian deterrent forces--are the ones that are causing the Lebanese Muslim to fear the Lebanese Christian. The Lebanese people, therefore, must be aware of this fact, and they must rely on themselves to solve their problems so that a proper Lebanese alliance, which has been made unattainable by the occupation, can be established. Al-Jumayyil is asking for a role for the Lebanese Muslim. The Muslim citizen of Lebanon should not let the PLO present itself as the sole spokesman for the Muslims after having presented itself as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

Bashir al-Jumayyil proceeds from these stated factors to propose a plan that in his opinion is considered a likely solution to the Lebanese crisis. This is the political decentralization plan. Al-Jumayyil says, "It has become clear that central unity has led to a conflict of powers and responsibilities that contributed to the eruption of conflicts. We are therefore looking for a decentralized unity that would define powers and distribute responsibilities and thereby contribute to the reduction of conflicts." He adds, "It is natural that the decentralization comprise the affairs that were the subject of dispute under the present centralized system. These are administrative and police affairs, political positions, personal status matters and educational programs." He says, "The fact that Lebanon would adopt a decentralized formula is not required by geography but rather by all the aspects of the nature of the Lebanese citizen. It springs from this pluralism that enriches our existence."

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But Bashir al-Jumayyil's positions were not openly espoused by the Lebanese Front when the front announced its opinion in an official document whose preparation lasted over 1 year. Research specialists in al-Kaslik University took part in drawing up this document which focuses on three principal points.

1. Alternatives to the 1943 formula are to be proposed.
2. The necessity of developing the formula through decentralization, a federation or a confederation is resolved.
3. Minorities, regardless of their religion, their sect and their number, are to be given equal rights with the members of the other sects.

Although the common denominators between the plan of the Lebanese Front and some aspects of the step-by-step political program of the national and progressive parties and forces are not few, the method of dealing with the Lebanese crisis today differs from the method of dealing with it when the crisis began. The dialogue may require the removal of many mines all of which are of the complex kind.

It is evident that despite occasional good intentions, Lebanon continues to be a big open mine, and those who are playing with matches in its vicinity are not few.

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LEBANON

RENEWAL OF MANDATE OF ARAB DETERRENT FORCES DISCUSSED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 23-29 Jan 81 p 27

[Article: "Deterrent Forces Are Looking for Financing; the Lebanese Front Is Calling for the UN Emergency Troops"]

[Text] The question that goes beyond the borders of Lebanon and looks for an answer in capitals other than Arab capitals is this: Will the deterrent forces remain in Lebanon? Will their mandate be extended, and if so, for how long?

It seems that the question of the presence of the deterrent forces in Lebanon has also entered into a dead end road. Their presence is under consideration, and their continuation [in Lebanon] has become subject to a limited time.

The Lebanese almanac is not restricted to [information about] the seasons, the months and the days. It goes beyond all that and records certain dates which are the dates for extending the mandate of the Arab deterrent forces by the Arab League.

Whenever the time for the extension approaches, a battle would break out in some region and the deterrent forces would be behind the battle so as to force the Lebanese state to ask for an extension of their presence and to persuade others that their presence in Lebanon was necessary to protect the people, to protect security and...the legitimate government!

When the clashes occurred recently in the Lebanese city of Zahlah (al-Biqa'), many people said that this was the beginning of the pressure for extending the mandate of the deterrent forces.

However, the Zahlah clashes were the beginning of a reverse pressure. For the first time voices were heard in Europe and in America condemning the shelling of the city of Zahlah and reminding [others] that the deterrent forces had come to Lebanon to be under the command of the Lebanese government and not to be a government over the government.

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The voices that were heard were official voices that have international influence.

Then the mobilization of Syrian troops on the Jordanian borders which occurred immediately after the Arab summit conference made Syria's positions and its conduct--especially its military conduct--the subject of investigation and analysis.

The ruling circles in Syria felt that they must take some action to guarantee that their forces will remain in Lebanon. This was because the first reaction they sensed after their recent provocations was a reluctance on the part of the countries that finance the Arab deterrent forces to continue financing them. The presence of these forces [in Lebanon] was basically to be temporary and subject to a limited period of time. Second, this presence did not help Lebanon build its own troops; on the contrary, it became an obstacle that prevented the creation of Lebanese forces that would establish security and uphold the legitimate government.

Syrian pressure was first exerted on Lebanon so it would ask for an extension for the presence of the Syrian deterrent forces on its territory.

Despite the clouds that are gathering in the atmosphere between the two countries and despite the fact that relations, which it may be said have been overcoming many "pitfalls" from the obstacles to forming the government to pressure not to attend the Arab summit in Lebanon--despite all this and other matters--the Lebanese government did send a request dated 9/1/1981 to the Arab League secretariat general asking for a 6-months extension for the deterrent forces because of the events and the new developments that the area was experiencing.

When the Arab League secretariat received Lebanon's request, it notified the member countries immediately, and especially the countries that finance the presence of the "Arab" deterrent forces in Lebanon. Chief among those countries are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

These countries that are "financing" the deterrent forces sent their response quickly to the secretariat general.

The response of these countries was that they cannot continue footing the bill for these expenses, whose burden was increasing, in the face of a situation that by its nature was to be temporary but which seems clearly now to be an interminable question.

These countries also suggested that the question be presented again to the [general] assembly of the Arab League so that the assembly can look into its details and make the decision that it considers appropriate. If the continued presence of the deterrent forces in Lebanon is decided, the countries that have been financing [the operation] suggest that [the operation] be financed by all the members of the League according to the ratio of their contribution to the League's budget.

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On the basis of these answers the secretariat general decided to present the matter to the [general] assembly of the Arab League at its meeting that is expected on 21/1/1981 in Tunisia.

These new positions aroused concern in the Syrian capital. Syria, therefore, began contacting these countries immediately to persuade them to turn away from this position.

Under the cover of investigating significant Arab questions Syria dispatched its minister of foreign affairs, 'Abd-al-Malim Khaddam to Saudi Arabia and to the Gulf area to discuss the matters of the area and their development and to request that these countries change their position on the question of the presence of the deterrent forces in Lebanon.

According to reliable sources in Arab League circles Minister Khaddam said that Syria was prepared to withdraw its troops from Lebanon immediately when the legitimate government asks it to do so. On the other hand, Syria cannot leave an important side of its borders uncovered to the Israeli troops.

Khaddam insisted on referring to the air battle that took place over South Lebanon. He affirmed that "Syria is performing its national duty in Lebanon, and the wealthy Arab countries are supposed to contribute to [the cost of] these troops remaining in Lebanon."

Although it is difficult to find out how the Arab countries responded to these statements, it is assumed that the response was [as follows]:

Is it possible that the presence of the Syrian forces in Lebanon will deter Israel from attacking Syria if it wants to? If Israel wants to wage a war against Syria, can Syria guarantee that it can defend itself and win the battle when 40,000 Syrian soldiers are on Lebanese territory?

Israeli airplanes do not only fly over South Lebanon; they also fly over Beirut, al-Jabal and North Lebanon. Why was there no opposition to these flights in all of Lebanon's air space if what is intended is the defense of Lebanon's air space, Lebanon's people and the Palestinian Resistance?

During the years of their presence in Lebanon the deterrent forces were to have helped in the establishment of a Lebanese army and Lebanese security forces that would undertake to carry out the functions of defense and security. However, the events did prove that it was Syria that impeded the process of building Lebanon's security and that it clashed more than once with the forces of the Lebanese army and with the Lebanese security forces. [The Syrian deterrent forces] imposed their authority even on the Lebanese police authorities.

The selection of 40,000 Syrian soldiers to be stationed in Lebanon means that the burden of these troops was to be borne by some Arab countries even though the presence of these troops is no longer an Arab

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responsibility as much as it is a Syrian extension of Syrian positions, Syrian demands and Syrian policies. Accordingly, it is Syria that has to bear these burdens, and it is then up to Lebanon to accept them or not to accept them. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

UN Forces Are Required

Besides the efforts that Syria is making to persuade the financing countries to extend the mandate of the deterrent forces, Syria exerted pressure on the Lebanese government so it would join it in contacting and interceding with others to persuade all those who were not convinced of the necessity to extend the mandate of the deterrent forces.

The new and old principle upon which Syria--and implicitly Lebanon--is basing its argument is that this extension for the deterrent forces will be the last extension and that the 6 months that are being requested will be the last 6 months.

But the Lebanese domestic situation is different from the way Syria is portraying it.

Although there are parties and organizations that oppose the Syrian presence without declaring their opposition, the Lebanese Front (the alliance of rightist organizations) decided to proclaim their opposition to the presence of the deterrent forces. They asked for the first time that the UN emergency forces be brought for all of Lebanon. This is what Brig Gen Raymond Iddih has been advocating for months. Raymond Iddih is the Lebanese member of parliament who opposes Syria and who has been living in the French capital for almost 6 years.

The Lebanese Front based its decision to oppose the presence of the Syrian deterrent forces in Lebanon on the fact that these forces had been sent by the Arab summit in Riyadh in 1976 to be Arab forces, but that they had shrunk and become purely Syrian forces. Their objective was no longer that which was designed by the Riyadh summit. Their objective had become a Syrian objective, and their presence was no longer a "deterrent"; it was a "military occupation."

The front stated that "Looking for specific and clear bases to justify extending the mandate of the Arab deterrent forces no longer leads to a result. Consolidating the authority of the state on Lebanese territory has become a request that cannot be complied with, and strengthening the army to enable it to spread itself throughout the regions of Lebanon cannot be met. Therefore, the only thing that is suitable for Lebanon would be the UN emergency troops. The UN Security Council has to do [the following]:

"It has to set the UN emergency forces that are confined in South Lebanon free in the various regions of Lebanon.

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"It has to increase the number of troops as determined by military opinion.

"It has to expand the power of these troops and give them the ability to carry out the military orders and instructions they have or to carry out what they consider militarily necessary to accomplish the specific objective."

It would seem after all this that the Syrian deterrent forces have entered into a bottleneck situation.

But their destiny from now and until the next 6 months is up in the air.

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MAURITANIA

OPPOSITION TO NEW CONSTITUTION APPEARING

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 16 Jan 81 pp 133, 134

[Text] There has been intense political activity for several days in Mauritania, where the cores of future political parties are starting to form. The draft constitution published on 17 December, intended to make the country a parliamentary Islamic republic, actually provides for a multiparty system (See MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS of 2 January, p. 22).

It will be noted that the cores of future parties are modeled on Mauritanian society, being based on clans, tribes and ethnic groups and more rarely on ideological similarities. Informed circles, however, allege that the Military Committee for National Salvation (CMSN), which has governed Mauritania since the overthrow of Mr Moktar Ould Daddah's government in July 1978, and the civilian government installed on 15 December intend to legally ban the establishment of parties on such bases.

For the time being, the authorities have not set an exact date for holding the constitutional referendum and for the elections. Despite this delay, there is no one who doubts the CMSN's intention to turn the government over to civilians, although the reasons for that decision are subject to conflicting interpretations.

According to government circles, the military authorities thus intend to keep the promise which they made in 1978 to return to their barracks as soon as they restored peace in the country and straightened out the economy.

Other sources maintain that the military government wanted to avoid the erosion of power, especially since its contacts with civilians have proved difficult and since it is not yet apparent that the economy has been put back on its feet, despite undeniable progress made toward greater budgetary and accounting strictness.

Some observers, without having any definite proof however, in turn explain the return to a civilian government as a result of the differences between the CMSN's various factions and wonder about the significance of the 20-day vacation currently being taken by the chief of state, Lieutenant Colonel Haidalla.

Whatever the case, the proposed amendments to the draft constitution, which have been submitted to a government commission, are encountering some opposition.

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Some opponents state that it is impossible to establish a Western-type democracy in a country which has barely emerged from feudalism and in which slavery continues to be practiced, even though it has officially been abolished. They are afraid that a majority of feudal lords will get into parliament, which would lead to a resurgence of tribalism and racial tensions. These opponents would have preferred that a "progressive" military-civilian government lead the country.

In a sermon, the imam of the great mosque of Nouakchott expressed his opinion that Mauritania, as an Islamic republic, does not need a constitution and can manage with the Koran. He also came out against the freedom of conscience clause included in the draft constitution.

We should note, finally, that some black Africans would like for their national languages to be recognized as "official"; this status has been conferred only on Arabic (thus replacing French) in the draft constitution.

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MAURITANIA

BRIEFS

FRENCH-MAURITANIAN SIGNALING AGREEMENT--The French JOURNAL OFFICIEL of 2-3 February 1981 publishes a decree of 29 January 1981 concerning the cooperation agreement on maritime signaling signed between France and Mauritania in Nouakchott on 23 November 1979. This is essentially a cooperation agreement involving the specific field of maritime signaling and according to whose terms the French Beacons and Buoys Department provides Mauritanian departments with technical aid financed by France. The aid mainly includes: the drafting of programs for the development or modification of maritime signals; the development of projects defining the features of facilities, equipment to be used and methods for its use; the sending of engineers for short missions; the sending of typical technical notices concerning both maritime signaling establishments as well as means of service; the supplying of technical documents on scientific bases and their technological applications to maritime signaling; and the worldwide dissemination of nautical information received from Mauritania. In addition, at Mauritania's request, France could contribute to expenditures for equipment and major repairs in connection with Mauritania's maritime signaling for facilities of international interest. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 306] 11,464

PRC COOPERATION AGREEMENT--Mohamed O. Amar, minister of rural development, recently joined with Zhao Yuan, Chinese ambassador to Nouakchott, in signing a cooperation agreement to aid the economic and financial recovery of the M'Pourie plain. According to the agreement, the People's Republic of China will make high-level technicians and an operating fund of 54 million ouguiya available to the farm. For its part, the Mauritanian Government is extending certain privileges, particularly a reduction in taxes and customs duties during the recovery period and exemption from entry duties for indispensable production items and equipment. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 307] 11,464

LIBYAN AID TO FISHING COMPANY--Libya has transferred \$5 million to the Mauritanian Fishing Company, according to an announcement made on 31 January by Jormetta Souneissi, secretary of the Libyan Friendship Office in Nouakchott, following his meeting with Mauritanian Minister of Interior Baham Ould Mohamed Laghdaf. The Libyan diplomat indicated that he had assured the minister of his country's willingness to grant all necessary aid to Mauritania. The provisions made are one of the results of the visit to Mauritania on 18 January of the head of Libyan diplomacy, [Surmatta Sunaysi] Tuvayki. The visit came after a period of tension between the two countries, marked by the expulsion of three Libyan diplomats accused of subversive activities. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 307] 11,464

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STEEL MILL, GUELB PROJECT--Two Mauritanian projects for upgrading iron ore have been launched by Mr Ahmed Ould Bneijara, the new Mauritanian prime minister. They include, on one hand, a small steel mill capable of producing 7,000 to 10,000 tons of reinforced concrete from scrap iron recovered by the National Industrial and Mining Company (SNIM) and, on the other, the Guelb project, which should enable Mauritania to continue to produce iron after depletion of the Kedia deposit, now being exploited. The construction of the steel mill at Nouadhibou (north of Nouakchott) represents an investment of \$2 million. The Guelb project, whose first phase will begin in 1983 and which should make it possible to dress the low-grade iron ore produced (34 percent), will cost \$500 million. The SNIM has invested \$100 million in the project, with the remainder being furnished by foreign financial backers led by the World Bank. [Text] Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 16 Jan 81 p 134] 11915

IRAQI DELEGATION'S OFFERS--A delegation of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party visited Mauritania from 28 to 31 December 1980 at the invitation of the Military Committee for National Salvation. According to the joint communique, the delegation offered to make a contribution of \$1 million to help Mauritania to abolish slavery in the country, with this amount to be invested in projects intended to aid the advancement of those freed men and women. The Iraqi delegation also offered \$1 million for the national volunteer service movement. Finally, the two parties have established the principle of an exchange of delegations between the national volunteer service movement and the social work structures in Iraq with a view to reinforcing cooperation and coordination between the two movements. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 16 Jan 81 p 134] 11915

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MOROCCO

CITRUS EXPORTS SURPASS EXPECTATIONS

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 302

[Text] Early Moroccan citrus export figures put out in mid-January surpass the most optimistic expectations published on the eve of the 1980-1981 harvest, which as we recall follows a 1979-1980 record harvest (MTM of 24 October 1980 p 2608 and 31 October 1980 p 2669). In fact, after the 14 January meeting of the executive committee of ASPAM (Association of Citrus Growers of Morocco), it was stated that as of 18 January exports stood at: 196,764 tons of clementines, 123,327 tons of navels, 8,209 tons of hamelines and 3,053 tons of salustianas. At that time, export stocks stood at 4,000 tons of clementines and 26,000 tons of navels. Thus an absolute record of around 200,000 tons of clementine exports should be set. This record confirms the trend toward increasing clementine production noted in recent years. Such an augmentation, in the opinion of the ASPAM executive committee, requires the trade to take a fresh look at the strategy for organizing and marketing this variety. Thus the committee, after discussing it, opted to establish a new chain of refrigeration units, totally integrated into the business, in the main clementine production areas, particularly Souse and Berkane. This chain would be for the purpose of preserving a part of the harvest from climatic vagaries affecting the variety. Also, the committee deemed it essential to develop an a "de-greening" infrastructure, especially at Berkane, a region known for the early ripening of its clementines. These two new elements of a new strategy for organizing the clementine season were submitted by the ASPAM directorate for discussion at the meeting held the same day in Casablanca of the CPA (Permanent Citrus Committee) which brings together representatives of OCE (Office of Marketing and Exports) and producers. Two committees were designated to carry out the technical study of these proposals. It was also indicated that the frost which hit the Beni Mellal region early this year may have damaged nearly 15,000 tons of citrus (clementines and particularly navels). By mutual agreement, all the Moroccan citrus growers have decided the fruit affected would not be exported, in order to protect the quality of the "Morocco" label. The fruit has therefore been assigned to the juice factories and the possibility of giving the stricken citrus-growers a compensatory indemnity is being currently examined.

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MOROCCO

BRIEFS

TUNISIAN-MOROCCAN PROJECTS--Mr Mansour Moalla, Tunisian minister for planning and finance, made an official visit to Morocco 28-30 January, accompanied by an important delegation which included in particular the directors of customs, duties, and planning. Mr Moalla, who came with the Moroccan officials to inspect progress in various joint projects and possibilities of extending bilateral cooperation, had talks with Mr Abdelkamel Rerhay, minister of finance, and Azeddine Guessous, minister of commerce, industry, merchant marine and fishing, among others (see MTM of 2 January, p 18). Concerning industry, the joint projects decided upon at the time of the recent official visit of the Moroccan prime minister, Mr Maati Bouabid, to Tunis--projects concerned with machinery, textiles, and chemistry--are being integrated into the 5-year plans which both Morocco and Tunisia are developing, and will be carried out by joint Tunisian-Moroccan companies. Concerning trade, prospects for bilateral trade have been reviewed in light of the trade and tariff convention signed by the two countries last December. Special attention was also given to Tunisia's and Morocco's relations with the EEC, particularly in light of the second enlargement of the European Community. Discussions on this question showed Moroccan and Tunisian views to be identical. Thus the two sides opted for creation of a joint working group to coordinate initiatives with the European Community. This working group will reinforce the coordination carried out by the Moroccan and Tunisian ambassadors to the Community. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 302] 9516

FISHING NEGOTIATIONS--Continuing negotiations with Spain. Once more the Moroccan-Spanish fishing agreement has expired without the two countries reaching an understanding on the terms of a long-range agreement that would end the practice of temporary agreements. The one which just expired on 31 January had already been extended by 3 months at the end of March, then by 6 more months at the end of June (see in particular MTM of 11 July 1980, p 1735 and 26 September 1980 p 2350). The negotiations, which were begun in Rabat on 23 January under the chairmanship of the Moroccan secretary of state for cooperation, Mr Abdelhaq Tazi, and the Spanish secretary of state for foreign affairs, Mr Carlos Robles Piquer, and which resumed on 29 January after being suspended on 25 January, did not yield results. The Spanish delegation left Morocco for Madrid on 1 February, with negotiations to resume in the near future. Meanwhile, the some 1,200 Spanish trawlers which were fishing in Moroccan waters have gone back to their home port in the Canaries. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 302] 9516

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SYRIA

JEWISH LEADER URGES AL-ASAD ON EMIGRATION

LD201219 London THE TIMES in English 20 Feb 81 p 7

[Excerpts] Damascus, 19 Feb--The leader of Syria's small, but culturally unique Jewish community today appealed to President Al-Asad to allow more than 100 Jewish girls to leave the country in order to marry abroad.

In an interview with THE TIMES, Mr Salim Totah, president of the Jewish Community Council in Damascus, pleaded with the president to ease the restrictions on emigration from Syria so that the girls, all aged 20 and 25, could travel to America or Europe to find husbands.

The sensitive issue of Jewish emigration from Syria is a fraught and highly controversial one for President Al-Asad's government. Jewish organizations abroad--and especially Israelis--claim that the 5,000 Jews of Syria are effectively held as hostages by the Damascus regime, and virtually forbidden to travel abroad for fear that they will go to Israel.

The Syrian Government denies this and claims that Jews live with the same rights, and restrictions, as any other Syrian citizen. When the president permitted 12 Jewish girls to emigrate to America two years ago it was treated as a major concession by the government.

Mr Totah said repeatedly that President Al-Asad had done much for Syria's Jewish community and that his coreligionists had equal rights with all other citizens. "We are Syrian Arab citizens," he said. "We were born in Syria. I am very jealous about my Syrian nationality. We have all our rights. There used to be restrictions upon us until five years ago, but they have been lifted, thanks to President Al-Asad.

"But we have one problem which is for us the problem of problems. We have between 100 and 150 girls between 20 and 25 years old. They want to get married, but unhappily the housing crisis here and the high cost of living has made marriage very difficult.

"As you know, young men need money to get married, and our young men prefer girls of between 18 and 20. The only solution, which we think about day and night, is that the older girls should be able to travel abroad to have a better chance of marriage.

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"Some time ago, His Excellency the president gave his approval for 12 girls to leave for the United States. They went there and were all married. That is why the girls who are 25 are always asking the authorities, and especially the president, to open the door for them so that they can find a better future.

"We hope your visit will be of help to us. I would like to thank the president for all he has done for us as a community, and for the whole country. We do not complain about anything except this problem. But deeds are not evaluated until they have been completed, and we are demanding that these girls be given a good future.

The Syrian Government is well aware of the political implications of any request for Jewish emigration. Mr Ahmad Iskander Amhad, the Syrian minister of information, insisted in an interview with THE TIMES that all government restrictions on Jews--including the special religious denomination section for Jews on Syrian identity cards--had been cancelled more than two years ago.

It was true, he said, that there was a financial bond Jews had to pay to the government if they wanted to travel abroad, but every Syrian citizen pays this, whatever his religion. The bond applies to me, too.

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TUNISIA

FRENCH-TUNISIAN IMPORTS, EXPORTS VIA PORT OF ROUEN EXAMINED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 301

[Text] Maritime relations with Tunisia are part of the traditional activities of profound importance to the port of Rouen. Trade with that country is substantial in volume and places Tunisia among the top 20 of the 100 countries with which the port of Rouen has regular relations.

At a time when the trend is toward increasingly organized and diversified traffic, the situation in Tunisia must be reviewed. For that reason, a delegation headed by Henry de Rochebouet and Claude Mandray, respectively president and general director of the Autonomous Port of Rouen, visited Tunis on 29 and 30 January. The delegation was made up of a dozen persons representing the Autonomous Port as well as the Rouen Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Rouen shipping enterprises involved in French-Tunisian trading. An information meeting attended by over 100 persons from Tunisian transit and foreign trade circles was held on 29 January at the Hilton Hotel in Tunis, while on 30 January, the delegation was received by Sadock Ben Jomaa, Tunisian minister of transport and communications, and made contacts in the maritime, port and commercial fields.

On the whole, traffic between Rouen and Tunisian ports amounts to 200,000 tons a year. It is generally greater from Rouen to Tunisia than in the opposite direction because of the large tonnages of grain exported certain years.

Imports from Tunisia are made up of unprocessed phosphates from Sfax and substantial amounts of fertilizer (up to 34,000 tons in 1978). Fertilizer imports should increase as a result of the planned installation, on the Saint-Wandrille pier, of a packing and distribution unit belonging to the Commercial Fertilizer Company, which plans to obtain its supplies from Tunisia. The rest of the import traffic is unfortunately insignificant. Only wine, which enjoys the services of a storehouse in Rouen that is among the most efficient in Europe, has an important tonnage.

Exports going to Tunisia are quite diversified, although dominated by the large grain shipments (70,000 to 80,000 tons in the best years), while sugar has also had high volumes at times (32,000 tons in 1979).

Alongside these two main categories justifying the tramp traffic are other types of goods carried by regular lines connecting the port of Rouen with Tunisia. These goods essentially include lubricants, chemical products, metals, machinery and vehicles.

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Two services currently provide the maritime connection between Rouen and Tunisia. They are the Tunisian Shipping Company, Tunisia's national fleet, whose newer vessels: the "Tozeur," the "El-Jem" and the "Kairouan," are well-known to the people of Rouen, and the French shipping company Marseille Charter. Both of the fleets have monthly schedules.

The great innovation seen in recent weeks in the Rouen-Tunisia connection is the introduction of containerization early in 1981. The port of Rouen, whose containerized traffic, expressed in standard 20-foot units, came close to 100,000 "boxes" last year, is obviously very happy to offer French-Tunisian trade the important experienced it has acquired in the field. Rouen is in fact the recognized specialist in container traffic applied to North and West Africa and the Indian Ocean. Application of this new technique to the Tunisia line could not find better support than from the port of Rouen.

Rouen-Tunisia Traffic (in tons)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Imports	83,000	64,000	75,000	73,000	27,000
Including:					
Phosphates and fertilizers	79,000	62,000	72,000	70,000	26,000
Other goods	4,000	2,000	3,000	3,000	1,000
Exports	101,000	49,000	155,000	127,000	71,000
Including:					
Grain and sugar	85,000	29,000	86,000	103,000	50,000
Other goods	16,000	19,000	69,000 ¹	24,000	21,000
Total	184,000	113,000	230,000	200,000	98,000

¹ In 1978, a special shipment of nearly 50,000 tons of alfalfa

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TUNISIA

BRIEFS

ECONOMIC SITUATION--Meeting on 28 January with President Bourguiba, to whom he presented a report on the planning commissions' meeting recently held in Gafsa, Minister of Finance and Plan Mansour Moalla gave the chief of state information on Tunisia's general economic situation, based on statistics drawn up at the close of 1980. The report shows, concerning investments first of all, that the API (Investment Promotion Agency) gave its approval to 1,713 projects last year, compared with 1,515 in 1979. The cost of the projects was 358 dinars, compared with 323 million the previous year. The government's tax receipts, excluding those from the RNTA (National Tobacco and Match Administration), amounted to 552 million dinars, up 18 percent in 1980. Concerning Tunisia's credit situation, credits to the economy increased 22.5 percent compared with 1979. Bank savings rose by 24 percent. Tunisian foreign exchange reserves increased 25 million dinars and amounted to 190 million dinars by the end of 1980, compared with 165 million in 1979. Other factors reveal the country's sound economic and financial health. The Treasury's account with the Central Bank, which totaled 27 million dinars in 1970, reached 60 million by the end of 1980. Likewise, the value of Tunisian exports rose 27 percent between November 1979 and November 1980. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 301] 11,464

CHEMICAL INDUSTRY--A new chemical industry company will soon be set up in southern Tunisia. Its capital will initially total 3 million dinars (about \$7.5 million). The project will be based on the working of potassium and magnesium. The company's production, whose establishment was announced by Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali during his recent tour of the south, will be 30,000 tons of potassium acid a year. The potassium and magnesium will also make it possible to launch new industries such as the detergent industry. In a second phase, the plant will be set up to produce magnesium oxide and sodium chloride. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 301] 11,464

SOCIAL EQUALITY--New social measures were adopted on 26 January by the Tunisian National Assembly, following other measures already taken. They are aimed at reducing inequalities between the different social classes and are the concrete expression of the political determination reiterated by the government of trying to achieve social equality. They include the establishment of a social security system in agriculture, extension of the "social umbrella" to new groups, the establishment of a death benefit and a system of loans to those insured and an increase in daily benefits for illness and maternity cases. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 6 Feb 81 p 301] 11,464

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